

ExxonMobil unveils development plan for N.L.'s fourth offshore oil field

ENERGY

ExxonMobil has formally submitted its application to develop Newfoundland's Hebron oilfield — outlining heftier production platform costs, and first oil by late 2017. The cost of building the Hebron platform and drilling development wells is now estimated at more than \$8.3-billion, according to the application for the province's fourth offshore oilfield that was filed on April 15 with the Canada-Newfoundland

and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board. Earlier, Hebron development costs were pegged around \$5-billion, though that estimate was several years old. ExxonMobil estimates production operations will cost more than \$5.8-billion over the life of the oilfield until 2046. The application anticipates



MIKE CASSESE / REUTERS

Barrick chairman Peter Munk says the chance to buy copper miner Equinox Minerals was too good to pass up.

EARNINGS REPORT

CENOVUS PROFIT FALLS 91% ON GAS SLUMP

Cenovus Energy Inc. reported Wednesday that first-quarter profit dropped 91% to \$47-million, hurt by lower natural gas production and lower prices. The Calgary-based company said that earnings per share plunged to 6¢ for the three months ending March 31. Cenovus earned \$209-million in operating income, or 28¢ per share, down from \$353-million, or 47¢, a year ago. Analysts on average were expecting the company to earn 36¢, based on Thomson Reuters consensus. Last year, Cenovus posted a profit of \$525-million, or 70¢ a share. The oil sands producer pinned the lower profit on decreased natural gas production and lower prices, as well as higher income taxes and royalties. *John Shmuel, Financial Post*

CENOVUS ENERGY INC. CVE/TSX, \$36.12, down 11¢

HUSKY HAS STRONG Q1 ON HIGHER PRICES

Husky Energy Inc., Canada's No. 3 integrated oil company and controlled by Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka-shing, said its first-quarter profit rose 70%, fuelled by increased output and higher crude oil prices. January-March earnings jumped to \$626-million, or 70¢ a share, from \$368-million (41¢) a year ago. Adjusted earnings rose to \$637-million, or 71¢ a share, from \$358-million (42¢), topping analysts' average estimate for 52¢ a share, according to Thomson Reuters. Oil produ-



cers benefited from a big jump in crude prices during the quarter, spurred by rising demand in emerging economies and unrest across parts of the Middle

East and North Africa. Husky's cash flow — an indicator of the company's ability to fund growth plans — rose 36% to \$1.16-billion, or \$1.30 a share from \$854-million, or \$1 a share, a year ear-

lier. Quarterly production rose about 5% to 310,400 barrels of oil equivalent per day. *Reuters*

HUSKY ENERGY HSE/TSX, \$28.71, up 22¢

MINING

No plans to shift away from gold: Munk

BARRICK AGM

BY PETER KOVEN

TORONTO • For investors questioning **Barrick Gold Corp.**'s \$7.3-billion offer for copper miner **Equinox Minerals Ltd.**, chairman Peter Munk has a simple message: The opportunity was far too good to pass up.

"You'd have to be counter-intuitive not taking advantage of the potential billion-dollar annual cash flow that you can get," he told shareholders at Barrick's annual meeting in Toronto.

"And that's the kind of free cash flow... that provides the lifeblood of any corporation that's aggressively determined to grow."

Mr. Munk assured investors Barrick has no plans to shift its focus away from gold, saying it would be "idiotic to kill the goose that laid the golden egg."

But he also stated it would be "equally foolish" to refuse to change. Without naming names, he referred to companies that disappeared because they were reluctant to do anything but their core business. He said copper is a natural business for Barrick to be in given that it requires the same skills and people as gold mining.

The comments came after a flurry of analysts and investors raised concerns that Barrick's valuation multiples could contract if it increases its copper revenues, since gold miners trade at higher multiples than base metal miners. The Equinox deal effectively doubles Barrick's non-gold revenue to 20% of the total.

Chief executive Aaron Regent repeated his comments from earlier this week that Barrick's mix of gold and non-gold revenues are in line with peers, even after the Equinox acquisition. He also pointed out that about 80% of Barrick's

reserves are gold, which compares favourably with rivals.

"We have a lot of opportunities on the gold side, and the copper side will complement what we do on the gold side," he said.

Mr. Munk's comments about the importance of free cash flow were timely, because Barrick demonstrated on Wednesday that it is simply swimming in cash.

The company reported a record first-quarter profit of US\$1-billion, with operating cash flow reaching US\$1.44-billion. Earnings like that were unimaginable a few years ago — by comparison, Barrick had a profit of US\$51-million in the first quarter of 2005. And assuming gold and copper prices remain strong, Barrick's cash flow is set to rise even more as the giant Pueblo Viejo mine in the Dominican Republic starts commissioning late this year.

The earnings appeared to calm investors, who wiped out more than US\$5-billion of Barrick's market value on Monday and Tuesday after the Equinox deal was announced. The stock rose more than 1% on Wednesday.

"[The first quarter's] robust cash flow, following on from previous quarters of good results, should help stabilize the company's share price and allow a recovery," Stifel Nicolaus analyst George Topping wrote in a note.

Barrick produced 1.96 million ounces of gold in the quarter and said it is on track to meet its full-year guidance of 7.6 to eight million ounces. Cash costs in the quarter were US\$437 an ounce, which is well below most competitors.

Financial Post
pkoven@nationalpost.com

BARRICK GOLD CORP.
Ticker ABX/TSX
Close \$48.34, up 59¢
Total volume 11,403,703
Avg. 6-month vol. 4,669,122
Rank in FP500 41

Rising costs the next big headache



CATTANEO

Continued from Page FPI

Cenovus's operating and net earnings were significantly depressed by its exposure to natural gas. Meanwhile, Nexen, a top and growing North Sea producer, cashed in from Brent prices, which averaged US\$105 a barrel for the company, a premium of US\$11 over WTI.

Politics: Unrest in the Middle East joined the U.S. administration's ambivalence about fossil fuels — particularly the oil sands — as major political wild cards for Canadian oil producers. Middle East turmoil lifted Brent prices in the quarter, but also meant lost production for some Canadian producers such as Suncor, which has operations in Libya. Meanwhile,

Nexen is trying to renegotiate an extension of its agreement with the government of Yemen that is expiring at the end of the year, but talks have not progressed.

Execution: Today's projects are increasingly complex and often involve new technology. That's why getting a project to perform as planned is not a given. Nexen's \$6-billion Long Lake oil sands project stands out for its difficulties in ramping up production. The company said it's now looking at deploying 10% to 15% in additional capital to improve operational performance.

Resource quality: Not all oil reserves are created equal. In the oil sands, for example, there

is a big disparity between leases. Some have great continuous reservoirs, making them great producers, and others don't. This is reflected in the difference in performance of steam-assisted gravity drainage projects. Typically, companies chase their best-looking prospects first, which means the quality of their next prospects could decrease.

Accidents: They happen and can wreak havoc on a company's performance, reputation and future prospects. BP PLC's Macondo well disaster last year impacted the whole industry, including Nexen, which was affected by a drilling moratorium in the Gulf of Mexico. Husky's downstream results were hurt by a fire at its upgrader in Lloydminster, which reduced its run rate from February to April. Canadian Natural Resources Ltd.'s results, due next week, will reveal the financial hit from its fire in January at the Horizon oil sands project.

Hedging: Oil companies enter into hedging contracts for their production to ensure they have cash flow to fund their programs. But making the right calls is difficult and can lead to big bottom line hits. Cenovus's profit was eroded by an unrealized after-tax hedging loss of \$201-million.

Market access: Producing oil and gas is a major part of the business, but reaching markets is also important. Pipeline constraints kept Canadian production from getting to U.S. markets in the first quarter, resulting in a discount between WTI and Brent of an estimated US\$22.86 a barrel, according to Cenovus. Meanwhile, an extension of the Keystone oil pipeline proposed by TransCanada Corp. is waiting for long-delayed approval by the U.S. government, which is stalling amid green movement opposition.

The more oil prices rise, the more interesting the business could get. Watch for rising costs to be the next big headache. The political landscape could also get more hostile if the NDP secures a bigger role in the federal election, leading to higher taxes, less federal support for the oil sands and a heftier green agenda.

Financial Post

ccattaneo@nationalpost.com

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

In re
MOTORS LIQUIDATION COMPANY, et al.,
f/k/a General Motors Corp., et al.
Debtors.

Chapter 11 Case No.
09-50026 (REG)
(Jointly Administered)

NOTICE OF (I) ENTRY OF ORDER CONFIRMING DEBTORS' SECOND AMENDED JOINT CHAPTER 11 PLAN AND (II) OCCURRENCE OF EFFECTIVE DATE

TO ALL CREDITORS, EQUITY INTEREST HOLDERS, AND OTHER PARTIES IN INTEREST:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that an order (the "Confirmation Order") (ECF No. 9941) confirming the Debtors' Second Amended Joint Chapter 11 Plan, dated March 18, 2011 (ECF No. 9836) (the "Plan"), of Motors Liquidation Company and its affiliated debtors (collectively, the "Debtors"), was signed by the Honorable Robert E. Gerber, United States Bankruptcy Judge, and entered by the Clerk of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York (the "Bankruptcy Court") on March 29, 2011. Capitalized terms used herein but not otherwise defined have the meanings ascribed to such terms in the Plan.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Confirmation Order is available for inspection during regular business hours in the office of the Clerk of the Bankruptcy Court, Alexander Hamilton Custom House, One Bowling Green, New York, New York 10004. The Confirmation Order is also available for registered users of the Bankruptcy Court's filing system by accessing the Bankruptcy Court's website (www.nysb.uscourts.gov) and for all parties at www.motorsliquidationdocket.com.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Plan and its provisions are binding on the Debtors, the Post-Effective Date Debtors, the GUC Trust Administrator, the Asbestos Trust Administrator, the Environmental Response Trust Administrative Trustee, the Avoidance Action Trust Administrator, any entity acquiring or receiving property or a distribution under the Plan, and any holder of a claim against or equity interest in the Debtors, including all governmental entities, whether or not the claim or equity interest of such holder is impaired under the Plan and whether or not such holder or entity has accepted the Plan.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Effective Date of the Plan (as defined in the Plan) occurred on March 31, 2011 and, as a result, the Plan has been substantially consummated.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that all proofs of claim arising from the rejection of executory contracts or unexpired leases pursuant to the Plan must be filed with the Bankruptcy Court and served upon the Debtors, the GUC Trust Administrator, the Asbestos Trust Administrator, the Environmental Response Trust Administrative Trustee, and the Avoidance Action Trust Administrator, at the addresses set forth in the Confirmation Order, on or before May 30, 2011. Any claims arising from the rejection of an executory contract or unexpired lease for which a proof of claim has not been filed by such date shall be forever barred and shall not be enforceable against the Debtors, the GUC Trust Administrator, the Asbestos Trust Administrator, the Environmental Response Trust Administrative Trustee, and the Avoidance Action Trust Administrator, or any property to be distributed under the Plan, the GUC Trust, the Asbestos Trust, the Environmental Response Trust, and the Avoidance Action Trust.

Dated: New York, New York
April 18, 2011

WEIL, GOTSHAL & MANGES LLP
767 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10153
Telephone: (212) 310-8000
Facsimile: (212) 310-8007

Attorneys for Debtors and
Post-Effective Date Debtors

Nexen Inc., Canada's No. 6 independent oil producer, which reported a 43% jump in quarterly profit on Wednesday, said it is still on the hunt for a partner for its massive shale gas holdings in northeastern British Columbia, but the Japanese earthquake has delayed the process. Nexen has opened a data room where would-be investors can review the company's confidential information on its shale gas resources in the region, and says a half-dozen potential buyers have shown interest. Nexen earned \$202-million, or 38¢ a share, in its first quarter, up from \$141-million (26¢) a year ago. But it said it is less likely to meet the upper end of its full-year production target range due to problems at its Buzzard and Long Lake projects. *Reuters*

NEXEN INC. NXN/TSX, \$23.97, up 42¢

TEMBECK Q1 LAGS AS FORESTRY DEMAND FALLS

Tembec Inc.'s quarterly profit lagged estimates, as lower demand for construction lumber and a fall in newsprint shipments dragged results, sending the Canadian forest products-maker's shares down 5%. Quebec-based Tembec, which supplies the North American housing space with Spruce-Pine-Fir lumber, expects its forest products segment — 27% of total sales — to post disappointing results until U.S. housing starts recover. Revenue at the company's fast-growing dissolving pulp segment rose 20% on increased shipments and higher pulp prices. January-March profit was \$7-million, or 7¢ a share, versus analysts' forecast of 22¢ a share, according to Thomson Reuters. *Reuters*

TEMBECK INC. TMB/TSX, \$5.68, up 35¢



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